

BIG  **LUCKY LUKE'S
HUNTING
ADVENTURES**
Bear Feet



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ADVENTURES**

BIG Bear Feet

By Kevin Lovegreen
Illustrated by Margarita Sikorskaia

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www.KeinLovegreen.com

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Chapter 1

The sun is going down so fast that I can almost see it moving through the trees. Deep-red clouds streak across a purplish-blue sky. I can't help but smile as I picture Grandpa saying, "A red sky at night is a sailor's delight." That means tomorrow will be another amazing fall day in Minnesota. The woods glow as if the leaves were millions of gold coins shimmering from the trees.

The color reminds me of an ancient Egyptian tomb loaded with gold to honor

a great king. For a moment, I imagine I'm an explorer entering a giant burial room. I need to cover my eyes as the sunrays shine down through the cracks in the ceiling.

But then my eyes pop open as Dad taps on my leg. I'm instantly transported back to reality. I remember I'm sitting in a tree stand with my dad and my sister, Crystal, at our hunting land. My dad is one of the greatest hunters I know and loves bringing us along to show us the ropes. Our goal this weekend is to get Crystal her first bear. I guess the boys at school don't believe she has the guts to shoot one. She's determined to prove them wrong.

I'm Luke. If you know me, you know I love to hunt—and black bears are really exciting to go after. Even though I'm not old enough to hunt bears myself, I have sat with Dad several times over the last two

years while he's hunted them. Crystal is older than me, so she's lucky enough to be the hunter this year. Dad and I are rooting for her. But I also know the time is coming for me to be in the hot seat. Next year is my year. I can't wait!

Without lifting his hand, Dad points into the woods, past the bait barrel. In Minnesota, bear season is in the fall. And the best way to hunt bears is to load up a bait station. A bait station is basically a big barrel full of food bears like to eat. Things such as bread, doughnuts, and cookies work great. The goal is to get them hitting the bait a couple of weeks before the actual hunting begins. Then when the season starts, we sneak to our stands and hope a bear will come to the bait station during daylight.

It sounds like a simple plan. But let me tell you, it's not all that easy to trick a big

bear. Thanks to the trail cameras pointing at the bait, we have seen pictures of several good-sized bears hitting the food lately. Yet we've been sitting in the stand for hours, and we're still waiting for our first bear to show.

Dad points again to the bait barrel. I look out, then do a double take. I see a black streak, but I don't really understand what I'm looking at.

I glance over at Crystal for some confirmation. Clearly, she knows what it is. Her eyes show a cross between fear and excitement.

I know not to make any noise at this point—Dad has taught me well. So I silently mouth, “A bear?” to Crystal.

She nods up and down so slowly that the red ponytail poking out of her hat hardly

moves. Also in slow motion, I turn back to the bait station. This time, I can tell it's a bear. Or at least I can tell it's the top of his back. The pure black fur is unmistakable. It sticks out against the thick green brush.

Clearly in no hurry, he heads toward us and the bait barrel. He never makes a sound—not one broken branch. Soon he'll be out in the open, and Crystal can take her shot.

This is it! I'm so excited for Crystal. We've sat in the stand for so many hours without seeing or hearing anything that resembles a bear. But now Crystal will finally get to shoot a bear for the first time. My heart pounds, and my hands shake in my lap as I wait for the bear to step out.

But then the bear stops. Suddenly, the black fur disappears. Silence! I give Dad a puzzled look.

Dad bends over so he can whisper into my ear. “He lay down.”

Crystal gives me the same puzzled expression. I show her the “down” signal we use with our dog, Trigger. She understands.

I turn back to where I last spotted the bear. I can now see flies or mosquitoes or both hovering around. That’s a sure sign the bear is still there. But without seeing him, I have no idea what his next move will be.

Helplessly, we sit in the stand, hoping he’ll get up and make the last few steps to the bait barrel. But with each passing minute, the light gets squeezed out of the woods. As our shooting time runs out, my heart sinks—but probably not as much as Crystal’s.

“He’s not coming in,” Dad whispers. “He knows we’re here.”

“Now what?” I whisper back.

“We need to climb down and sneak out of here,” Dad says loudly enough for both Crystal and me to hear.

Crystal’s eyes get big again. “I am not getting down with that bear right over there,” she says, trying to contain the sound to our stand.

“Okay,” Dad whispers with a smirk. “You can stay here tonight. We’ll come and get you tomorrow.”

Crystal just cocks her head and gives Dad “the look.”

“Follow me,” Dad says. “We’ll be fine.”

Dad climbs down. I’m right behind him, and Crystal doesn’t waste any time

either. As soon as my foot hits the ground, the feeling of safety vanishes. We are now on the ground—just like the bear! Quickly, we hurry down the trail and get out of there without any issues.

Unfortunately, there's no luck for Crystal this season. But I already can't wait to see what happens next year.



Chapter 2

A year flies by. It's now another steamy day in August. I'm lying on my bedroom floor, enjoying the air conditioning and picking off the endless zombies in my video game. I hear my dad whistle for me.

“Give me a minute!” I shout.

I crush through the last slow-walking creepers and make it to a level I have never reached before.

“Yes!” I exclaim.

Quickly, I pause the game, then race down the stairs.

“What’s up, Dad?” I ask.

“It’s time to run to the bakery to see what they have left over from the weekend,” Dad says. He smiles and rubs his hands together, as if we were about to pick up the mother lode of something really good.

I shake my head. “Oh boy,” I say with hesitation.

That’s my typical response when Dad’s either trying to be funny or trying to get me excited to do something that will take a lot of work. This time, he’s trying to be funny.